

Patient portal

- [A novel perspective on dissemination: somatic metastasis of germ cell tumors from the central nervous system](#)
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“Patient portal” refers to an [online platform](#) that allows patients to access their health information and communicate with healthcare providers. It's commonly used in hospitals and clinics.

Some typical features of a patient portal include:

Viewing [test](#) results

Requesting [prescription](#) refills

Messaging doctors

Scheduling [appointments](#)

Accessing visit summaries or [discharge instructions](#)

Patient [portals](#) (PP) have been shown to improve outcomes and quality of care. Engaging them requires internet access, technological literacy, and dexterity, which may serve as access barriers ¹⁾.

Patient Portal Access

- [Unintended Consequences of Patient Portal Access](#)
- [A patient-centered view of symptoms, functional impact, and priorities in post-COVID-19 syndrome: cross-sectional results from the Quebec Action Post-COVID cohort](#)
- [Designing an interoperable patient portal to augment an Advanced Nurse Practitioner service for Children with hydrocephalus](#)
- [The Association Between Sociodemographic Factors, Social Determinants of Health, and Spine Surgical Patient Portal Utilization](#)
- [Generation and multi-dimensional profiling of a childhood cancer cell line atlas defines new](#)

[therapeutic opportunities](#)

- [Feasibility Study of Stereotactic Radiosurgery Treatment of Glomus Jugulare Tumors via HyperArc VMAT](#)
- [Microsurgery for a medial left giant lesser sphenoid wing meningioma complicated by postoperative vasospasm of the ipsilateral supraclinoid carotid artery](#)
- [Cervical Laminoplasty for Resection of Hemorrhagic Cavernous Malformation Using a Biportal Technique](#)

Unintended Consequences of Patient Portal Access

While patient portals are a powerful tool for enhancing patient [engagement](#), [transparency](#), and [autonomy](#), their widespread adoption has introduced several unintended consequences that warrant consideration by healthcare [providers](#), [administrators](#), and [policymakers](#).

1. Increased Patient Anxiety

Immediate access to test results, clinical notes, or imaging reports—without prior physician interpretation—can cause distress. Patients may misinterpret benign findings or misunderstand medical [terminology](#), leading to unnecessary worry or even self-diagnosis.

2. Overburdening of Healthcare Providers

Patient portals often lead to a sharp increase in message volume. Physicians may receive numerous questions, requests for clarification, or non-urgent messages, which can contribute to burnout and interfere with clinical workflow.

3. Misinterpretation of Clinical Information

Medical notes are typically written for interprofessional communication, not for patients. Without contextual understanding, patients may misread tone, misunderstand diagnoses, or incorrectly interpret plans, resulting in confusion or erosion of trust.

4. Privacy and Ethical Concerns

Patient portals can inadvertently compromise privacy, especially when access is shared (e.g., with family members or caregivers). Sensitive information—such as results related to terminal illness, genetic testing, or mental health—may be exposed unintentionally.

5. Digital Divide and Health Inequity

Older adults, individuals with low digital literacy, and those without reliable internet access may be excluded from the benefits of patient portals, widening health disparities.

6. Delay in Seeking Professional Guidance

In cases where results appear “normal,” patients may choose to delay or skip follow-up appointments, unaware that further clinical context is essential. Conversely, reading results prematurely may lead to inappropriate self-directed actions or healthcare overuse.

Patient portal access is a transformative development in modern healthcare. However, thoughtful implementation strategies—including tailored education, customizable access settings, and physician-guided communication—are essential to mitigate its unintended consequences and optimize patient

safety and satisfaction ²⁾

¹⁾

Owolo E, Petitt Z, Charles A, Baëta C, Poehlein E, Green C, Cook C, Sperber J, Chandiramani A, Roman M, Goodwin CR, Erickson M. The Association Between Sociodemographic Factors, Social Determinants of Health, and Spine Surgical Patient Portal Utilization. Clin Spine Surg. 2023 Oct 1;36(8):301-309. doi: 10.1097/BSD.0000000000001458. Epub 2023 Apr 21. PMID: 37081673.

²⁾

Rowe DG, Goodwin CR. Unintended Consequences of Patient Portal Access. JAMA Oncol. 2025 Apr 10. doi: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2025.0415. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40208618.

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